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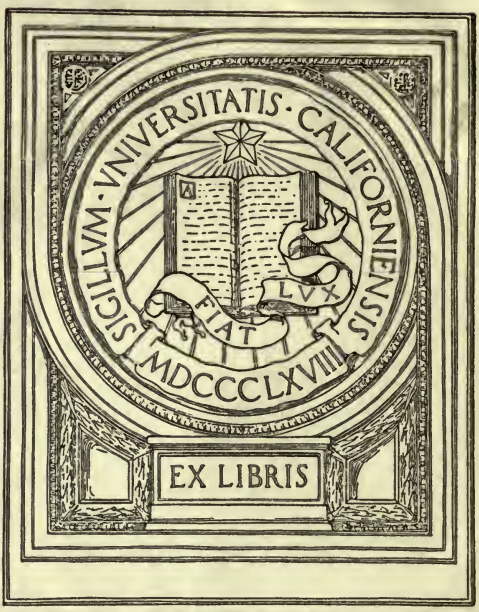
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THE

MERCHANT

OF

GUADALOUPE:

A PLAY,

IN THREE ACTS.

AS IT WAS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre Royal, Margate,

On Tuesday, the 5th of October, 1802.

FROM THE FRENCH OF MERCIER.

By JOHN WALLACE, Esq.

London:

PRINTED FOR J. AND T. CARPENTER,

OLD BOND STREET.

1802.

S. Gosnell, Printer,
Little Queen Street, Holborn.

PREFACE.

SHOULD the preſent piece ever meet the eye of the French Author, the Tranſlator has, in the firſt inſtance, to apologize for making the moſt trifling alteration in a drama that has ſo deſervedly met with diſtinguiſhed and unbounded applauſe upon the French theatre, and increaſed the fame ſo long attached to the name of Mercier. That author has, in the moſt happy manner, carried the ſimple and intereſting ſtory of Mr. Warner, in the novel of Sydney Biddulph (from which production he acknowledges, in his Preface, to have borrowed the ſtory for his play), to nearly double the length of the preſent piece. The ſimplicity of the plot has induced the Tranſlator to curtail and leave out many intereſting paſſages, as he was fearful the full length of the original piece might be too tedious for an Engliſh audience. The chief alteration he has made, has been, in introducing the character of Mulſon at the end of the Second, inſtead of the Firſt Act, by

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which the real ſituation of the Merchant is not ſo ſoon made known to the audience, and, conſequently, the intereſt carried more into the heart of the play.

This piece was performed at the Theatre Royal, Margate, on the 5th of October, 1802; and, it is probable, might have given more intereſt, had not the principal performer been ſo inattentive to his part, as to introduce language more of his own compoſition than the author's, and in ſome paſſages he paid ſo little attention to grammatical chaſtity, as to excite riſibility.

The Tranſlator laments that he is under the neceſſity of noticing this inattention, but in juſtice to his work he is compelled to it, in order to do away the unhandſome and *falſe* remarks that a few of the journaliſts have been pleaſed to beſtow upon his labour.

The other performers did ample juſtice to their characters: and the piece, even under the diſadvantage mentioned, was extremely well received, and concluded without the ſlighteſt mark of diſapprobation. A paper called the Sun, has, however, in a very *wiſe* and *excellent critique* of *four lines*, obſerved, that "A young man of faſhion, one of the Pic Nics "no doubt, has brought out a play at Mar-"gate:

" gate: to give ſome idea of its *badneſs*, it is " ſtated, that even at Margate it was *damned*." In order, therefore, to give a better idea of its *badneſs* (if it really merits that title) than the Sun has been able to do, it is preſented to the Public, and it is recommended to the writers for the above paper, upon a future occaſion, to know what they are criticizing upon, and not to condemn without taking the pains to diſcover and point out the defects: and when it is remembered, that the piece was *lent* to the theatre, without any pecuniary motives whatever in favour of the Tranſlator, and was of *great ſervice* to an honeſt performer, by bringing a crowded audience to his benefit, and only an endeavour to contribute (as far as lay in his power) to the innocent amuſements of a watering-place, even that conſideration might have ſpared his poor attempt to pleaſe from ſuch illiberal, and he thinks unmerited, remarks.

A *Canterbury paper* has been as *wiſe* and as *liberal* as the Sun.

The only *juſt* critiques that have appeared upon this performance were inſerted in the Morning Poſt and Courier; thoſe papers have correctly pointed out the errors and blunders of the actor, and not inconſiderately thrown

damnation upon the author. Such as it is, it is now offered to the public, and to thoſe who take any pleaſure in ſeeing charity rewarded, and pride puniſhed, it may not perhaps prove unentertaining, or unworthy their peruſal.

The Tranſlator is much indebted to his brother for the excellent Prologue and Epilogue he wrote upon the occaſion, which were extremely well delivered by Mr. Bartley and Mr. Lee, and deſervedly applauded.

PROLOGUE.

PROLOGUE.

Written by Mr. JAMES WALLACE.

Spoken by Mr. BARTLEY.

EACH infant play (ſo writes ſage Doctor Time)
At firſt is nurtur'd by a bit of rhyme;
When force it gains, to ſtand and tread alone,
It quits the ſtrength that foſter'd for its own;
The cradle leaves, grows fat upon the ſtage,
And boaſts, what few would talk about, its age.

Theſe trappings, then, the humble bard excuſe,
Who ſtirs, at Friendſhip's call, his ſleepy muſe,
And ventures thus, through inoffenſive verſe,
A brother author's feelings to rehearſe.
O ye, who know a parent's fear and joy
In giving to the world a darling boy,
Now ſunk in anguiſh, now with hope elate,
Lift up his offspring, prop its feeble ſtate.
Eleven years have roll'd their courſe away
Since firſt he wrote—yet dar'd not *act* his play,
Till buſy rumour whiſper'd in his ear,
That modeſt worth would find protection *here.*
Yes, among other gifts, our Thanet's iſle
Puts forth compaſſion's tear, good-nature's ſmile;
Blends ſenſe with beauty, mirth with virtue's grace,
And ſhews, where'er we look, an honeſt face.

Sooth then each ſoft alarm, each tender care,
And let this little bantling bloſſom there;
Imperfect thus he comes, juſt ſnatch'd away
From cloſet darkneſs to meridian day.
But keep in mind, that, ſhould he riſe or fall,
His *only intereſt* is, to pleaſe you all.

Dramatis Personae.

MEN.

Woodville *(the Merchant)*,	Mr. Long.
Mulson,	Mr. Bew.
Mr. Vane,	Mr. Taylor.
Servant,	Mr. W. Long.

WOMEN.

Mrs. Milville,	Mrs. Inchbald.
Mrs. Vane,	Mrs. Bew.
Lucy,	Miss Clarke.

Servants, &c. &c. &c.

Scene—*London.*

THE

MERCHANT

OF

GUADALOUPE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room.*

Mr. VANE *is ſitting at a Table covered with Papers, Letters, &c. and Writing-deſk. Mrs.* VANE *on the other Side, in a Diſhabille, ſitting in a large Chair.*

Mr. Vane.

You loſt a conſiderable ſum at play yeſterday, Madam; I muſt beg of you to be more prudent in future.

Mrs. Vane. How diſagreeable you are! You forget the days when I win.

Mr. Vane. But you ſhould never loſe, Madam.

Mrs. Vane. Come, come, you will run no riſk in advancing me an hundred to day; I'll play with the Counteſs, ſhe is the moſt fooliſh creature poſſible: give me an hundred, I ſay, and I 'llengage to win a th ouſand.

Mr. Vane. Well, well, but chooſe your adverſaries: have nothing to do with your prudent and attentive people, who obſerve every card: let your party conſiſt of the giddy and the fooliſh; they are the beſt players.

Mrs. Vane. Oh, leave me alone.

Mr. Vane. But, Madam, it is high time to reprimand you ſeriouſly for your other extravagances.

Mrs. Vane. Dear Sir, how often muſt I repeat to you, that the only thing that could poſſibly induce me to marry you was to get rid of the ennui that troubled me when ſingle?

Mr. Vane. Madam, I don't wiſh to deprive you of any of the privileges due to a married woman; run here, run there, invite to your houſe whom you pleaſe, but only have ſome mercy upon my purſe. I find here, in looking over ſome old letters, one from a near relation, a firſt couſin; the date is twenty years back; he went to ſeek his fortune in America, and there died.

Mrs. Vane. How came you to the knowledge of his death?

Mr. Vane. Why, I only ſuppoſe ſo, as I know he was poor, and he never ſolicited any favour or aſſiſtance from me, nor have I heard any thing about him for years.

Mrs. Vane. Pray have you heard any thing of your ſiſter lately? The fooliſh woman prides herſelf upon her knowledge in literature.

Mr. Vane. She, I believe, is out of danger.

Mrs. Vane. Has ſhe returned the books I lent her?

Mr.

Mr. Vane. She has.

Mrs. Vane. I beg ſhe may aſk for no more, for I poſitively declare I 'll ſhut up my library: ſhe aſks for books as if they coſt nothing, and in returning them has the inſolence to reproach me for not having read them myſelf. She 's an impudent huſſey, and annoys me exceedingly.

Mr. Vane. Well, my dear, we very ſeldom ſee her; ſo there is no reaſon to complain.

Mrs. Vane. She has the inſolent pride to paſs for a tender affectionate mother, with her two brats, that ſhe can't ſtir without; and ſhe is always pouring forth her miſerable complaints, and ſighing after her ſtupid deceaſed huſband.

Mr. Vane. She has reaſon to ſigh, for he left her in very indigent circumſtances. I always cautioned her, and diſapproved of the match, becauſe the fellow was not worth a farthing; her anſwer was, that he was a good and virtuous man; and ſo there ſhe is, with her ſtarving children, ſtuffed up in a fourth ſtory, forced to work for daily ſubſiſtence.

Mrs. Vane. For my part, I am determined never to ſee her more, and I beg of you to tell her ſo.

Enter a Servant.

Servant. There is a man wiſhes much to ſpeak with you: he brings intelligence of a Mr. Woodville.

Mr. Vane. Woodville! that 's the very name of the relation I juſt ſpoke about.

Servant. He ſays, Sir, he has ſomething particular to communicate to you from a Mr.

Woodville, a relation of yours, whom he lately ſaw in America.

Mr. Vane. This is very ſtrange. Shew him in. *(Exit Servant.)* I always thought, ſomehow, that he was not dead; and yet I have had reaſon to ſuppoſe, and indeed to wiſh that he was.

Enter WOODVILLE, *ſlowly, meanly attired; Mr. and Mrs.* VANE *do not riſe from their Chairs, nor do they aſk* WOODVILLE *to be ſeated.*

Mrs. Vane. (Aſide.) How dare my ſervants let in ſuch a fellow?

Mr. Vane. Well, Sir, what is your buſineſs with me?

Woodville. Heaven be praiſed, my dear couſin! what joy it gives me once more to ſee you! have you quite forgot me?

Mr. Vane. Sir, I really am at a loſs to know your meaning.

Woodville. My name is Woodville; I am a near relation of yours.

Mr. Vane. I remember, Sir, having a relation of that name, but I thought him dead long ſince.

Woodville. He lives, Sir; and you ſee him now.

Mr. Vane. Sir, it is ſo long ſince I have ſeen or indeed heard any thing about you, that you can hardly expect I ſhould remember you.

Woodville. I ſee but little alteration in you; I ſhould have known you any where. I, alas! am much more altered; indeed that is not ſurpriſing;

priſing; fatigues, troubles, unhappineſs, a long reſidence in a foreign climate, all have tended to change my perſon: do you remember what friends we were?

Mr. Vane. Ay, college friends; I remember we uſed to play the fool together; but what the devil is that to the purpoſe? what is your buſineſs with me?

Mrs. Vane. (Aſide.) This fellow, I ſuppoſe, is going to aſk charity; I'll ſend away the ſervant that let him in.

Woodville. I was ſettled, Sir, at Guadaloupe.

Mr. Vane. Well, Sir, and what then?

Woodville. I had amaſſed, with much labour, a ſmall independence. Condeſcend, Sir, to liſten to my unhappy tale. Having loſt a wife and only child, and nothing remaining that attached me to a foreign climate, I reſolved to return to England: a love for my native ſoil ſpoke to my heart. The veſſel on which my little fortune was embarked was wrecked on the coaſt of Spain; ten of my companions were drowned in endeavouring to ſave the ſmall remnants of their property.

Mrs. Vane. And I think they were very fortunate, Sir, as they would have had nothing left to live upon.

Woodville. You are right, Madam; I have more than once envied their fate; they are not the moſt to be pitied. It is with the greateſt difficulty I have reached London: oh, Madam! if you knew how much I ſuffered on the journey, what hardſhips I have undergone, 't would almoſt break your heart. Upon my arrival I made inquiries after you: when I heard that kind

kind Heaven had bleſſed you with fortune, and that you lived in comfort, it gave me the moſt lively joy.

Mrs. Vane. Comfort, Sir? (Impertinence!) You ſeem, Sir, in other countries to have forgot the manners of this.

Woodville. I entreat your pardon, Madam; but from the elegance of your houſe, the number of your ſervants, the—

Mrs. Vane. Well, Sir, and what then? Your obſervations are impertinent.

Woodville. Forgive me, Madam, but the poor man cannot help noticing all that ſtrikes him; he ſees, and feels, the extreme diſtance that ſeparates him from all comfort.

Mr. Vane. Well, Sir, but you'll permit me to tell you, that your conduct here is very ſtrange; you have introduced yourſelf in a very extraordinary manner, pretending to bring me news of a relation abroad; but I believe all your ſtory to be an infamous falſehood. You have very kindly choſen me, in preference to all others, to repair the injuries of the elements; and ſo, becauſe chance has made you my couſin, I am to be anſwerable for your misfortunes: you are ſhipwrecked on the coaſt of Spain, and I am to be reſponſible for it in London; you arrive here, after an abſence of twenty years, and ſay, Here I am, help me.

Woodville. I have, indeed, that prayer to make.

Mrs. Vane. Sir, all our wiſhes will not reſtore to you what you have loſt.

Woodville. I know it, Madam, but I am willing to work for a ſubſiſtence; and I only

implore your benevolence and intereſt, to get me placed in ſome office.

Mr. Vane. Why, Sir, in your younger days you were not willing to do any thing; you led a very profligate life; you would attend to nothing.

Woodville. I confeſs, Sir, my youth was ſpent in diſſipation; I have too often repented of it, but the ſeduction of pleaſures—

Mr. Vane. Seduction of pleaſures, Sir! Ay, you left this country involved in debt.

Woodville. Oh, Sir, all my debts I honeſtly paid; all, I aſſure you.

Mr. Vane. Your conduct, Sir, cauſed your uncle to die of a broken heart.

Woodville. Oh! indeed, indeed, Sir, that—that is not true.

Mr. Vane. Not true! Here is a pretty fellow, comes to aſk charity, and gives me the lie.

Mrs. Vane. Inſolent fellow! Why don't you turn him out of the houſe?

Woodville. Forgive me, I mean not to offend.

Mrs. Vane. Why, Sir, how dare you—

Woodville. My dear uncle had always the greateſt friendſhip for me, and I loved him. He wrote to me ſeveral times; here are ſome of his letters—*(taking out his pocket-book)*—I ſhall always preſerve them; you will ſee how he eſteemed me.

Mr. Vane. Oh, Sir! I have no wiſh to ſee them.

Woodville. He tells me here, he would have done more for me, but his two children claimed all

all he had. His recommendations were of the greateſt ſervice to me; your father's memory, Sir, I ſhall always cheriſh and revere; and though now I am poor, I was never guilty of an action to make you or myſelf bluſh, or determine you to caſt me for ever from your protection.

Mrs. Vane. Mr. Vane ſometimes relieves the poor, but at preſent all his money is engaged.

Woodville. Madam, I *only* want ſome employment; any thing not humiliating I will undertake. I will endeavour to give ſatisfaction when employed, and no fault ſhall be found with my attention and correctneſs; I will be laborious and exact. I requeſt your aſſiſtance earneſtly, becauſe, Madam, becauſe I— I will at once confeſs, that on my labour alone depends my ſubſiſtence; to-morrow's dawn will ſee me deſtitute of bread, if this day your generoſity does not relieve me. I have none in this immenſe town to aſſiſt me; you are my only friends; I'll do any thing for ſupport, but, in the name of God, relieve me at this unhappy moment.

Mr. Vane. (Aſide to his wife.) To get rid of this fellow, I 'll give him a crown.

Mrs. Vane. Nonſenſe! This is the common cant of all beggars; diſmiſs him immediately, and order him never to return. A pretty kind of a relation indeed!

Mr. Vane. Sir, I can do nothing for you, and ſo pray retire.

Woodville. I obey, Sir; but before I go, I have

have one favour to aſk, which I think you can't refuſe me.

Mr. Vane. Come, Sir, no longer conference; what is it?

Woodville. I entreat of you, Sir, to give me the addreſs of your ſiſter: I remember her a child; ſhe, I thought, appeared kind and compaſſionate.

Mr. Vane. Sir, it 's a long time ſince I have ſeen her; ſhe leads a very extraordinary life, ſhuns all her connexions; and, beſides, what ſervice can ſhe render you? ſhe is poor, and has two children; however, my ſervant will give you her addreſs; but it is uſeleſs; ſhe has not the means of ſerving you.

Woodville. Though ſhe is poor, ſhe *may* do ſomething for me, and if not, we will condole together; ſhe knows what misfortune is, and will perhaps feel the more for *me*, for my unhappy ſtate.

Mr. Vane. Well, Sir, but I have now ſome important buſineſs—and—and I muſt beg of—

Woodville. (In a low voice, with the greateſt earneſtneſs, retiring very ſlowly.) Forgive my importunities; I am driven indeed to extreme diſtreſs; if you could do any thing for me—I ſuffer ſeverely. *(Mrs.* Vane *ſhakes her head.)* Nothing! Well, I am content. True courage conſiſts in ſuffering with reſignation. I am a man, and will maintain the dignity of one; I know, beſides, that I have no right to aſk of you aſſiſtance. Forgive me, Madam, for having preſumed to ſolicit as I have done: the entreaties of a man are always preſſing when the heart is loaded. I hope,

Madam—*(Mrs.* Vane *rises, and retires without regarding him.)* You, Sir, I hope will never know the misery of falling suddenly in distress.

Mr. Vane. Damn it, Sir, will you leave me? will you leave me, I say? You put me out of all patience; there is no bearing such insolence. Shew this fellow out. (Woodville *withdraws slowly, and with great submission. Mr.* Vane *goes hastily out, and in a great passion, on the opposite side of the stage.)*

END OF ACT I.

ACT

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Mrs. Milville's Room, rather a poor one. Mrs.* MILVILLE *is at Work: her Maid, or rather Companion,* LUCY, *enters, and puts a Guinea in her Hand.*

Lucy.

MY dear miſtreſs, here is the produce of our little labour. I have found one who is charmed with the delicacy of your work, and who has promiſed to pay me well, whenever I bring any. There, my dear miſtreſs. *(Giving her the guinea.)*

Mrs. Milville. There is no ſhame, my dear Lucy, in working to maintain one's ſelf and family. My poor huſband did not think to leave me in ſuch a ſituation.

Lucy. Whenever I meet your brother in his grand equipage, and think how he abandons his virtuous ſiſter, I am almoſt inclined to cry out to the paſſers by, and expoſe his barbarity.

Mrs. Milville. No, my dear friend, let us bear up againſt misfortune with calmneſs and reſignation. My brother is not naturally bad, but he has been corrupted by a hard-hearted woman, who has deſtroyed all his good qualities.

Lucy. Why does he reproach you ſo?

Mrs. Milville. For not being rich. He is indeed somewhat cruel to me.

Lucy. Your sister-in-law treats you with a contempt that makes me hate her. During your whole illness, at death's door, to send only once to inquire after you! wishing then, no doubt, to hear you were no more! not once to call upon you!—declared hatred, open enmity, is preferable to such a cruel indifference.

Mrs. Milville. The rich, notwithstanding the strict ties of blood, generally break all connexion with the poor,; we see that every day; but I have a certain dignity of mind that renders me insensible, or rather superior, to the insult. We should never, my dear Lucy, return evil for evil; that 's the way to establish enmity. Patience sometimes gets the better of cruelty and pride Besides, for my dear children's sake, I should be resigned. My brother may perhaps listen to the calls of nature, and repair, by serving them, the injuries he has done their mother. His fortune, Lucy, is all his own acquiring, and he has a right to dispose of it as he pleases.

Lucy. But, my dear mistress, you make my heart ache to see you at times so melancholy, and sigh so deep.

Mrs. Milville. I then think of the poor children, and see that their wants will increase with their years; but I trust in Providence; and believe me, Lucy, peace resides in my heart. *(A knock at the door.)* See who knocks. (Lucy *goes out, and returns.)*

Lucy. There is a stranger, Madam, wishes to speak with you.

Mrs.

Mrs. Milville. Who can it be? Shew the perſon in.

Enter WOODVILLE.

Woodville. I ſee, Madam, I alarm you; but when I ſhall have made myſelf known to you, you will be leſs ſurpriſed at the liberty I have taken: I have ſomething particular to communicate to you, Madam.

Mrs. Milville. To me, Sir?

Woodville. Yes, Madam: condeſcend, I entreat you, to grant me my requeſt.

Mrs. Milville. Be ſeated, Sir. *(She waves* Lucy *to retire.* *Mrs.* Milville *and* Woodville *ſeated.)*

Woodville. I ſee, Madam, that you do not remember me.

Mrs. Milville. I do not recollect ever to have ſeen you, Sir.

Woodville. You have ſeen me, Madam, but you were then very young, and cannot remember me; you were but ten years old, and that is not an age to remember the features of a man, that change in time, eſpecially when care and miſery have borne him down. But the name of Woodville may yet be freſh in your memory, who went to America about twenty years ago?

Mrs. Milville. Yes, Sir, I remember him well; he has been long dead.

Woodville. So it was reported; but he ſtill lives; and you now ſee that relation of yours.

Mrs. Milville. You, Sir, you are—

Woodville. I ſhall not diſguiſe my ſituation from

from you; I come, Madam, to ſolicit your pity.

Mrs. Milville. My pity, Sir? To ſerve the unfortunate is only a duty.

Woodville. I dare ſay you already know that my youth was ſpent in diſſipation. Left an orphan in my infancy, and under the tuition of your father, who gave me the beſt advice, I not paying ſufficient regard to it, was ſoon diſcarded by my friends. Willing afterwards to make reparation for my follies, I embarked for America; your worthy father gave me the beſt recommendations, and I was doing well—he died! what a father! what a friend! what a loſs for me! I continued in America, and ſeemed forgot by my relations in Europe.

Mrs. Milville. Did you never write to my brother then?

Woodville. Pardon me, Madam, but eight or ten letters remained unanſwered; I thought it was the remembrance of my paſt follies that made my relations conſpire againſt me; and thinking them ſufficiently atoned for by misfortune, I ceaſed in my turn to write, and falſe reports were ſpread of my death. I gained, by my attention, the confidence of the merchant under whom I ſerved; he had a daughter, whom I obtained in marriage; the father was delighted; his daughter loved me; and I was the happieſt of men. After an union of fifteen years—pity me—I loſt her; that was a deep wound, which time can never heal. The ſorrow under which I laboured rendered life inſupportable. The ſky of America had no further attractions for me; every object that

ſurrounded me recalled to my mind the loſs I had ſuſtained; and I reſolved to return to England. Alas! Madam, the coaſt of Spain was witneſs to my ſhipwreck!

Mrs. Milville. Did you loſe all?

Woodville. Every thing, Madam, and reduced to the neceſſity of travelling on foot. But I learned from your generous father, that firmneſs of mind ſhould always mark the man, and I have borne my hardſhips with becoming fortitude.

Mrs. Milville. Your pitiful ſtory has penetrated my heart. Have you loſt every thing?

Woodville. I ſee I afflict you, Madam. I have ſeen better days, 't is true, but I am now reduced to the neceſſity of ſoliciting the protection of thoſe who will condeſcend to aid me; for no one ſtands more in need than myſelf.

Mrs. Milville. My dear couſin, I am poor as well as yourſelf; but I have, thank Heaven, a little to ſhare with a relation ſtill more unfortunate.

Woodville. Oh, Madam!

Mrs. Milville. If you can be ſatisfied with my frugal repaſt, you are always welcome. This ſervant, or rather friend, and my dear children, are my only companions.

Woodville. Madam, your generoſity—

Mrs. Milville. I ſee little of the world, and ſeldom go out; but I will exert myſelf, and go out more. I 'll uſe all my endeavours to ſerve you, and ſee if I can't procure you ſome employment; though naturally timid, I feel myſelf bold when I intercede for a friend.

Woodville. You reſtore life and hope, and add grace

grace to generosity; but as you seem so interested on my account, may I inquire a little into your past life?

Mrs. Milville. Oh, Sir! I have suffered many hardships; I lost a husband whom I adored; you know from experience how cruel that separation is; Fortune, that began to smile upon me, vanished with him, and I was left in want, with two little daughters.

Woodville. Two little daughters!

Mrs. Milville. Yes, Sir. I had sufficient courage to see my situation without trembling; I resolved to renounce the world, that only caresses the rich, and to live in retirement. But may I ask how you came acquainted with my address?

Woodville. From your brother, Madam.

Mrs. Milville. From my brother?—what! have you seen him?

Woodville. Yes, Madam.

Mrs. Milville. Well.

Woodville. I had the honour of being admitted to his apartments; I told him the same melancholy tale I have recited to you.

Mrs. Milville. Well, what did he say? What did he do?

Woodville. Your brother, Madam, seemed occupied in business; he was much surprised at my appearance; I took the liberty to ask him your address.

Mrs. Milville. What did he say?

Woodville. That you were unfortunate, and that it was utterly impossible for you to assist me.

Mrs.

Mrs. Milville. But did *he* do nothing for you?

Woodville. Nothing, Madam; and I do not murmur; for every one is proprietor of his own fortune, and maſter of what he poſſeſſes. Had he offered me aſſiſtance, I ſhould willingly have accepted it; for I am much diſtreſſed for money. Luckily, the people where I lodge are very good, and have promiſed to wait my convenience.

Mrs. Milville. Dear relation, gold is not quite ſo plentiful here as at my brother's; but till ſomething better offers, accept, I entreat you, of this guinea: it is a debt I pay with joy to a relation, to a friend; take it; it is offered with a good heart.

Woodville. Generous lady, you are not much more fortunate than myſelf; you have offered me your table, I accept it with thanks—that 's enough; another better able will aſſiſt me with money.

Mrs. Milville. Take it, my poor unhappy friend.

Woodville. Will you really diſtreſs *yourſelf*, in order to relieve *me?* (*She puts the guinea in his hand, and ſheds tears.*) Tears of compaſſion ſpring from your eyes; and I—oh! oh! oh! (*He ſheds tears, and kiſſes the guinea ſeveral times, ſpeaks with the moſt violent emotion, and riſes at the ſame time.*) This piece is precious to me; I 'll keep it—oh God! I 'll keep it all my life.

Mrs. Milville. All his life! what does he ſay?

Woodville. Yes, yes; all my life! But, oh! excellent woman— (*He kiſſes Mrs. Milville's hand, and the guinea, ſeveral times with rapture.*)

Forgive me for having put to the proof a heart like yours; I can no longer conceal myself—forgive—forgive me—you—

Mrs. Milville. Why all these violent emotions for so slight a favour?

Woodville. Slight! You have fixed in my heart a love that will stick there for ever, and ripen every hour. I am not the poor distressed man you think me; and you are my heiress.

Mrs. Milville. I?

Woodville. Who else deserves the name? Providence has loaded me with riches, and I was willing to make a proper use of them, and did not wish to be deceived in obliging ungrateful relations. My heart was desirous of finding out the virtuous. The hope of fortune too often renders the face of man hypocritical, and makes it assume the appearance of benevolence. In America I formed the plan I have this day put in execution. I was resolved, to try my friends, to appear in want; the good I thought would assist me (and I am not deceived): with them did I determine to share my fortune. I have at last found the heart I searched for, and with it I divide the fortune kind Heaven has bestowed upon me, and do for ever cast off your unworthy brother.

Mrs. Milville. Oh! do not cast him off.

Woodville. Not cast him off? Why, are you of the same blood? Could the wretch see his sister want the common necessaries of life? I have not told you all; I received from him the most degrading treatment; I did all I could to move his pity; I assumed the appearance of a man in the most extreme distress; I humbly supplicated;

ſupplicated; I looked like a man ſtarving; I had the voice of one; and what did I receive? Inhuman refuſals! Haughty pride, inſulting coolneſs characterized all his expreſſions! He turned me out of doors; he uſed the brutal language of a rich tyrant trampling upon the poor. His wife was ſtill more haughty than himſelf, and regarded me with an eye that marked the moſt cruel contempt. I might perhaps have forgiven them; but what I never can forgive, as long as I hold breath, is their barbarous uſage of you. A brother, rolling in luxury, to ſee his ſiſter work for ſubſiſtence!—honour, virtue, and every good quality, muſt be ſtrangers to his heart.

Mrs. Milville. I never aſked him to aſſiſt me.

Woodville. As the law cannot puniſh pride and ingratitude, we ſhould be the more ſevere in chaſtiſing thoſe vices. It is a debt due to ſociety (and I'll diſcharge it), to humble the man that treads upon you. Come, virtuous friend, I ſhall give you an employment that will, I am ſure, pleaſe you—to aſſiſt the unfortunate; ſeek for them, bring them to me, and I will give them aid. (*Retiring.*) I have an elegant houſe, you muſt come and adorn it; for the moſt ſuperb palace is a miſerable abode without Friendſhip—let her reign, let her give out her laws. Adieu! (*Shakes her by the hand.*) Adieu! [*Exit* Woodville.

Enter LUCY, *crying.*

Lucy. Oh, my dear miſtreſs!

Mrs. Milville. Well, Lucy, what 's the matter? why do you cry?

Lucy. Oh, my dear miſtreſs! pardon me; I ſhall cry all day—I heard all the dear good man ſaid.

Mrs. Milville. You were able to ſupport my adverſity, and you can't my happineſs.

Lucy. No; I feel it too ſenſibly—*(ſobbing very deeply.)* I was ſure that—that—P—P—P—Providence would one day reward you.—I muſt cry; do let me cry—I have ſo much pleaſure in k—k—k—crying, that I ſhall k—k—k—cry for a year. [*Exeunt.* Lucy *crying.*

Scene changes to Mr. Vane's Houſe.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. VANE, *and Mr.* MULSON.

Mulſon. I tell you, I know him well.

Mr. Vane. Pooh, pooh! My dear Mulſon, did you obſerve his dreſs?

Mulſon. Why, his dreſs a little ſurpriſed me, I muſt confeſs; but he 's a ſtrange character, and I know him to be the rich merchant of Guadaloupe.

Mr. Vane. Ha! ha! ha! How you are miſtaken! he 's in the greateſt diſtreſs—he had all the appearance of it, I am ſure: he 's a poor fellow, I tell you.

Mulſon. I wiſh you were half as rich; I know his face as well as I know my own; he is a widower, has no children, and is maſter of an immenſe fortune.

Mrs. Vane. What! an immenſe fortune, and no children?

Mulſon.

Mulſon. Exactly ſo, Madam; I ſaw him at Guadaloupe about three years ſince.

Mr. Vane. Oh! you muſt be miſtaken; he came to us to aſk charity.

Mulſon. Well! he might have aſked charity; but for all that, he alone is richer than you and all your neighbours put together.

Mr. Vane. Oh! but he was ſhipwrecked on the coaſt of Spain—I recollect reading the circumſtance in the morning papers;—why, he 's a couſin of mine.

Mulſon. A couſin of yours?

Mr. Vane. Yes.

Mulſon. Then he came to try your friendſhip for him.

Mr. Vane. What?

Mulſon. That 's his character—in his lifetime he has played many ſuch ſtrange tricks.

Mrs. Vane. You quite alarm me, Mr. Mulſon.

Mulſon. I can aſſure you, Madam, what I ſay is true; your couſin is the rich merchant of Guadaloupe;—I have had ſeveral mercantile tranſactions with him.

Mrs. Vane. Is it poſſible? Did you ſee him at Guadaloupe?

Mr. Vane. We thought him dead twenty years ago—and now to come and beg!

Mulſon. He 's a ſtrange character, and very fond of ſurpriſing people.

Mrs. Vane. Can it be?

Mulſon. He 's the moſt liberal character poſſible; and as he was pleaſant enough to come and aſk charity, you no doubt gave him what he wanted, and it will all end in a good joke.

Mr. Vane. Hey! but I confeſs I received him rather coolly.

Mulſon. I am ſorry for that; he is equally ſenſible of ill as of good treatment—for thoſe who regard him, he would go to the world's end to ſerve.

Mrs. Vane. (Aſide.) Every word tears my heart.

Mr. Vane. I am deviliſh ſorry I treated him ſo roughly. Mr. Mulſon, I ſhall diſguiſe nothing from you; I confeſs, we did not give him the moſt friendly reception.

Mulſon. How much did—ha! ha! ha! did he aſk you to lend him—five hundred; hey?

Mr. Vane. Pooh! what ſignifies the ſum?

Mulſon. I beg your pardon; you ſurely could not refuſe to lend him five thouſand.

Mr. Vane. In the name of friendſhip, my dear Mulſon, endeavour to reconcile him to us.

Mulſon. Why, what would you have me ſay?

Mrs. Vane. Why, ſay Mr. Vane had a thouſand things to vex him at the time he called; that you know his good heart, and the friendſhip he has for his relations; that I had been in a bad humour, and had been ſcolding my ſervants; that we love him tenderly; and that to-morrow we ſhall pay our reſpects to him, and he will find us quite different people.

Mulſon. You give me rather a diſagreeable commiſſion; but he's an excellent man, and will, I dare ſay, forget what has happened.

Mrs. Vane. For Heaven's ſake, haſte!

Mulſon.

Mulſon. I'll do my beſt;—good morning;—you ſhall hear of my ſucceſs. [*Exit* Mulſon.

Mr. Vane. Well, Madam! theſe are the effects of your haughty conduct; you are the cauſe of my loſing this friend; you have heard he is rich, and has no children—

Mrs. Vane. Peace, blockhead! Was he *my* relation? did *I* know him? Had he been *my* relation, I ſhould not have been ſuch a fool. You are now properly puniſhed for your ſtupidity.

Mr. Vane. Why, damn it, Madam, was not I going—did I not want—was not my hand in my pocket? was not I going to give him a crown, and did not you prevent me?

Mrs. Vane. Yes, Sir; and I then gratified you—confeſs it. It was then time, to be ſure, after all your ill language to him.

Mr. Vane. If I have acted thus, Madam, it was to conform to your cruel and avaricious mind, that can't bear to give the poor a farthing, though you will fool away thouſands upon your fantaſtical ugly face, and at a card-table;—I bluſh at your inhumanity, Madam.

Mrs. Vane. You are the meaneſt of wretches; you did not even know how to refuſe him with courage; you were timid and abaſhed in his preſence; you trembled at a man, who, from his outward appearance, did not ſeem to poſſeſs a ſixpence.

Mr. Vane. It was your inſulting pride that will moſt provoke him; did—did not you leave the room?—I have no patience with you—did not you—I tell you what, Madam; it's all your fault; you alone are to blame; and as

your

your conduct is the cauſe of my loſing ſuch a chance of enriching myſelf, you ſhall be anſwerable, Madam, for what I have loſt.

Mrs. Vane. Yes; I'll be anſwerable for your folly.

Mr. Vane. If he cuts me off, damn me, but I'll revenge myſelf on you; I'll reduce you to the ſtricteſt economy;—for the ſake of ſaving a miſerable crown, you'll ſee an immenſe ſucceſſion go to others.

Mrs. Vane. Go, Sir, throw yourſelf at his feet, entreat him to forgive you—do any thing that is mean; you are capable of it—

Mr. Vane. That muſt be your buſineſs, Madam; and if you diſobey me, we ſeparate;—a woman has always the moſt influence; therefore go and ſoften him, or you never ſee me more. [*Exit Mr.* Vane.

Mrs. Vane. What's to be done? This will require great caution, and boldneſs too.—If I could but have ſuſpected his riches, I would have offered him my houſe, my horſes; nothing ſhould have been too good for him.—Where was my penetration? Oh, Fortune! you have delighted in blinding me to-day; but as you generally favour the audacious, do not think to eſcape. [*Exit.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Woodville's houſe, elegantly furniſhed.*

Enter WOODVILLE *well-dreſſed, leading Mrs.* MILVILLE.

Woodville.

WELL, my virtuous friend, you are now at home; I have no orders to give here—this is your houſe; invite to it whom you pleaſe; and, when you permit me, I'll be one of your viſitors.

Mrs. Milville. This my houſe! do you think I can enjoy ſuch luxury? It overpowers me.

Woodville. Let your ſiſter, with her inſolent airs, ſee you in this opulence; and may the convulſions of humbled pride eternally torment her!

Mrs. Milville. Sir, you muſt be ſenſible, that I neither ought nor can accept of ſuch favours; moderate them, I entreat you: if they become your opulence, they by no means become my ſituation. You know how I did live; a little more will make me quite content.

Woodville. My amiable friend, that uncle, whoſe memory will be always dear to me, orders me, from the bottom of his tomb, to act thus; 't is he who inſpires me at this moment; what I now do is not from oſtentation, but to

give an example to the rich, to learn them never to deſpiſe the poor; to ſhew them, that, in one turn of her wheel, Fortune may raiſe thoſe that were at her feet, and cruſh thoſe at her ſummit. Let this leſſon, if poſſible, curb the inſolence too common to the rich. (*He rings—enter ſeveral Servants.*) Here are your ſervants, Madam; you will always find them ready to obey your commands. Every thing you ſee here is yours. (*He takes the guinea from his pocket.*) This guinea, that I will for ever keep and revere; this guinea, that might indeed have ſaved me from ſtarving—this proves that you will honour riches, in making a worthy uſe of them.

Enter a Servant.

Servant. Sir, Mr. Mulſon wiſhes to ſpeak with you.

Woodville. Mulſon!—Will you permit me to receive him?—Shew him in. [*Exit Servant.*

Enter MULSON.

Mulſon. Ah! who thought to ſee you in Europe!—But how came you to conceal yourſelf ſo long?

Woodville. Becauſe I was ruined; I was ſhipwrecked, and ſome time ago they killed me in this country; I am, nevertheleſs, tolerably well.—Joking apart, though, I was near being drowned.

Mulſon. Ay, ay, you loſt nothing; the ſea is very covetous, but can't devour all.

Woodville. I have ſomething left for myſelf and friends.

Mulſon.

Mulſon. I believe ſo; and you are now come to enjoy yourſelf in the boſom of your relations.—By the by, I am charged to bring you the congratulations, the excuſes, the reſpects of two who are very much attached to you.

Woodville. Whom, if you pleaſe?

Mulſon. Mr. and Mrs. Vane—as good people as can be: I am one of their intimate friends.

Woodville. One of their intimate friends!—Do you know that lady?

Mulſon. I have not the honour.

Woodville. What! frequent Mr. Vane's houſe—his intimate friend; and not know that lady?—That lady is his ſiſter, Sir.

Mulſon. His ſiſter! what, has Mr. Vane a ſiſter? (*He bows to her.*) Why, Sir, I know all that has happened; but at the bottom they are very good people, and they hope you will pardon the reception they gave you; they beg of you to allow them to viſit you, to apologize for their coolneſs to you.

Woodville. Sir, I ſee you are come here as a mediator. Well, Sir, I'll ſee them.

Mulſon. (Aſide.) I've ſucceeded famouſly—Well! I'll carry them the agreeable news of your reconciliation; they'll be delighted, I aſſure you. [*Exit.*

Woodville. And can they have the inſolence to come?—that's rather too much: in that caſe I ſhall have my turn.

Mrs. Milville. Dear couſin, good and generous as you are, I'll take upon me to ſpeak in their favour.

Woodville. This is worthy of your noble mind; but they muſt be made to feel. 'Tis

not me they have inſulted, but the poor and helpleſs—the poor concealed under the coat I wore; 'tis *them* they have inhumanly trod upon, and my reſentment is juſt. What right has a rich man to bear down his fellow-creature? inſtead of feeling for his wants, to treat him with contempt and ridicule?—No! ſuch pride ſhould be puniſhed, and the love of order requires, that the haughty man, who treads upon the head of his fellow-ſubject, ſhould, in his turn, be humiliated.

Mrs. Milville. Did not you ſay he was going to give you ſomething, and his wife prevented him?

Woodville. Yes! a crown, perhaps, to get rid of me; I, however, wiſh him no harm; but ſince he'll condeſcend to any baſe, mean action, for the ſake of money, it is but fair to torment him, and before his eyes to reward the virtuous. My revenge goes no further.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. VANE.

Mrs. Vane. My dear couſin, what an odd creature you are! Where do you learn theſe droll tricks of yours?—To be ſure it was the moſt laughable—Ha! ha! ha!—

Woodville. Ha! ha! ha!—It made you laugh, Madam; did it?

Mr. Vane. Ha! ha! ha!—You acted your part to admiration.—Ha! ha! ha!

Woodville. And ſo did you—and you, Madam.

Mr. Vane. We are juſt come to ex—ex—explain the—the—the—the—

Mrs.

Mrs. Vane. Ye—ye—yes, my dear couſin; we are very ſorry to have received you ſo coolly —be—be—but—

Woodville. But, Madam, this is not my abode; you are now in the houſe of your ſiſter-in-law. *(He ſits down at the further end of the room, and takes up a book, which he continues reading occaſionally.)*

Mrs. Vane. I am overjoyed at my dear ſiſter's good fortune;—but you are really the moſt extraordinary perſon poſſible.

Woodville. No, Madam; there are others equally extraordinary, and equally ridiculous.

Mrs. Vane. You look charmingly, my dear ſiſter; you ſeem ſo contented, ſo happy—

Woodville. She will be more and more ſo, Madam.

Mrs. Vane. And your dear children, how do they do? They—

Woodville. Have had time to grow ſince you ſaw them laſt, Madam.

Mrs. Milville. And yours, Madam?

Woodville. Have you any children, Madam?

Mrs. Vane. Yes; they are at ſchool.

Woodville. You'll do well to leave them there, Madam; and, above all things, take care not to educate them yourſelf.

Mrs. Vane. Our dear couſin is ſtill a little cruel.

Mr. Vane. We confeſs our faults, and we are now come to make reparation for them.

Mrs. Vane. Our dear couſin has too much ſenſe to think any more of what has paſſed:—half London would have been deceived, and have acted in the ſame way.

Woodville.

Woodville. The inhabitants of the metropolis are much indebted to you, Madam.

Mrs. Vane. Dear ſiſter, endeavour to make peace for us.

Mrs. Milville. It is my ſincereſt wiſh.

Mrs. Vane. (After a little ſilence.) Gua—Gua—Guadaloupe is ſaid, Sir, to be a very fine country, a delightful climate, a—a—a— Our dear couſin ſeems very fond of reading; I 'll take the liberty of ſending him ſome books from my library; I have ſome that are very much eſteemed.

Woodville. I read but little, Madam; but I have by chance ſtumbled upon a book that pleaſes me much.

Mrs. Vane. What is it, dear couſin?

Woodville. A ſelection of verſes—they begin with "Verſes on a Coat." *(Reading.)* "Verſes on a Coat,"—that will ſhew you, Madam, a man who ſees and feels—far ſuperior to thoſe verſes addreſſed to the zephyrs, and to the opera-girls — I am highly pleaſed with it. *(Reads.)*

"VERSES ON A COAT.

"Oh, my coat! how I thank you,
How much I am indebted to you;
I enter a room, am not aſk'd to ſit down,
Receiv'd with a haughty and inſolent frown!"

Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. Vane. How well our couſin reads!

Woodville. Ay, and feels too, Madam: the author, in ſpeaking of Holland, ſays,

"Here the *man* makes the coat of conſequence,
And not the *coat* the man of conſequence."

—There is, however, nothing ſo enviable as money; nothing elſe is worth living for; we ſhould be ſlaves to money, do any thing mean for money.—Always ſhut your door againſt the poor man, hear not his complaints, turn him out of your houſe, tread upon him—

Mrs. Vane. Be not ſo ſevere; believe me, we ſincerely repent of what has paſſed; your generoſity to my ſiſter creates in me neither envy nor jealouſy; I rejoice at her good fortune, and I only want her friendſhip and yours.

Woodville. (Riſes.) Are you *ſincere*, Madam? Do you *really rejoice* at her proſperity? I may be miſtaken; and if ſo, if you really, from the bottom of your heart, love her, I'll forget all that has paſſed, and will neither be unjuſt nor revengeful; I know that virtuous ſentiments will ſometimes lie dormant in us without being ſtifled, and riſe when the heart is really moved. We have all too much need for indulgence, and ſhould pardon the repentant;—if what you ſay is ſincere, I freely forgive you. *(He rings.—Enter an Attorney, with papers, &c. Servants.)* I here make a free gift of all my fortune to this worthy woman—friendſhip and juſtice demand it; all the world ſhall know what I have done for her, and why I have done ſo; I will expoſe to all the world the noble and generous manner in which ſhe relieved me, and I then think all the world will applaud me.—My dear friend, I here offer you my hand; our hearts are, I am ſure, alike.

Mrs. Milville. Oh, my benefactor! you deſerve a better woman.

Woodville. A better!—This guinea *(takes out the*

the guinea, and looks earneſtly at it) tells me a better cannot live.—Come, Madam—*(to Mrs.* Vane)—every thing is forgot, and now witneſs the happineſs of your ſiſter and myſelf.

Mrs. Vane. (With great agitation.) I ſhall expire with rage.—Never, never! inhuman man!

Woodville. Take her hence. *(Mrs.* Vane *is conducted out, almoſt fainting ; Mr.* Vane *following her, and looking very down-hearted.)* Cruel and ungrateful woman! ſhe is not even worthy of my vengeance, and I almoſt repent of it. *(Takes Mrs.* Milville *by the hand.)*—Let us, however, forget, in the boſom of friendſhip, that there exiſt hearts ſo baſe and envious.

[*Exeunt.*

THE

EPILOGUE.

EPILOGUE.

Written by Mr. JAMES WALLACE.

Spoken by Mr. LEE.

AGAIN old Cuſtom's laws muſt we obey—
A truce to preface, then; what think you of the play?
Yet not ſo faſt—perhaps I may be hiſs'd:
And being ſomething of a phyſiognomiſt,
Before I ſpout, I 'll take a ſlight ſurvey,
Then tell our author what the audience ſay.

Encourag'd thus by women kind and pretty,
(From whence, no matter—St. James's or the city,)
I may proceed:—yet ſtop—one ſquint at Pit,
For there it is the ſolemn jury ſit.

Up gets haughty Wiſdom! Upon my word,
To introduce ſuch ſtuff is quite abſurd;
This tale of pity, and this virtue's grace,
Ill ſuit the paſſions of a watering-place!
Avaunt, roars timber Jack, with ſcenes of ſorrow,
I ſteer*s* away from Guadaloupe to-morrow;
Beſides theſe naſty *wa*pours, dowſe my beaver,
Mayhap we carry home the yellow fever!!!
D. I. O. liſps Cheapſide Dick, in ſalted jacket,
Juſt from on board the hoy—I meant the packet;
I took a ſail down here to laugh, not cry.
What ſays pouting Miſs there?—Yes, ſo did I.

Well, well! don't fret, for now the play is done,
And ſoon, good folks, you 'll ſee much better fun;
Here, take a taſte—our Margate paſtime is,
To chatter ſcandal, ogle, ſtare, and quiz,
Touch up the auctioneer, gape at Bonaparte,
And now and then we win and loſe a *heart*.
Our playwright's ſorry jade, with proſe ſo big,
He knows can neither run with aſs or pig!
'Mid the droll ſports that take their jingling round,
He only tried how ſentiment would ſound:
Diſguis'd in rags, his wealthy Merchant came
To puniſh vice, and proſper virtue's name;
The proud to mortify, the poor to bleſs,
And give, to thoſe who merit, happineſs.
The Poet's moral then, if underſtood,
Though out of practice, is in precept good.
As now my grateful eyes look round, they trace
A Woodville's virtues glowing on each face:
Contempt for riches when they 're miſapplied,
But reverence for them when to worth allied.
Miſtake not, then, the generous aim in view;
This leſſon is for others, not for you.
Good-nature beams and flatters on each ſide,
For charity is Thanet's greateſt pride.

THE END.

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